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(54) **SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR MOUNTING LIGHT EMITTING DIODES FOR A VISUAL ALARM DEVICE IN MULTIPLE PLANES**

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ABSTRACT

(57) Systems and methods for mounting light emitting diodes for a visual alarm device in multiple planes are provided. The visual alarm device can include a plurality of light emitting diodes (LEDs) mounted on a printed circuit board and configured to flash during an emergency situation, wherein each of the plurality of LEDs can be mounted in a respective one of a plurality of planes.

18 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets

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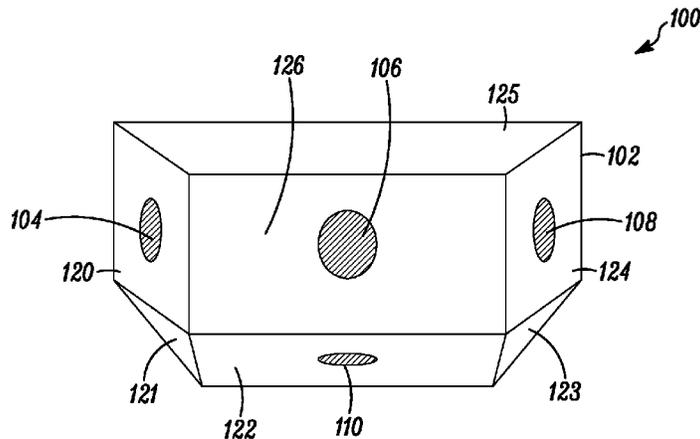
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H05K 1/18 (2006.01)
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G09F 9/33 (2006.01)

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(2013.01); **B60Q 1/2696** (2013.01); **F21S**
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See application file for complete search history.



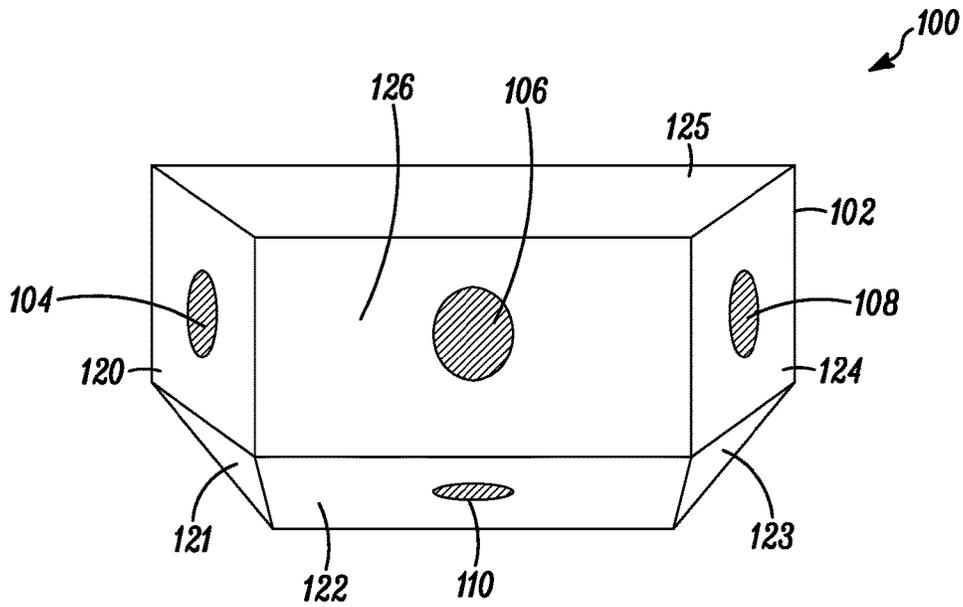


FIG. 1

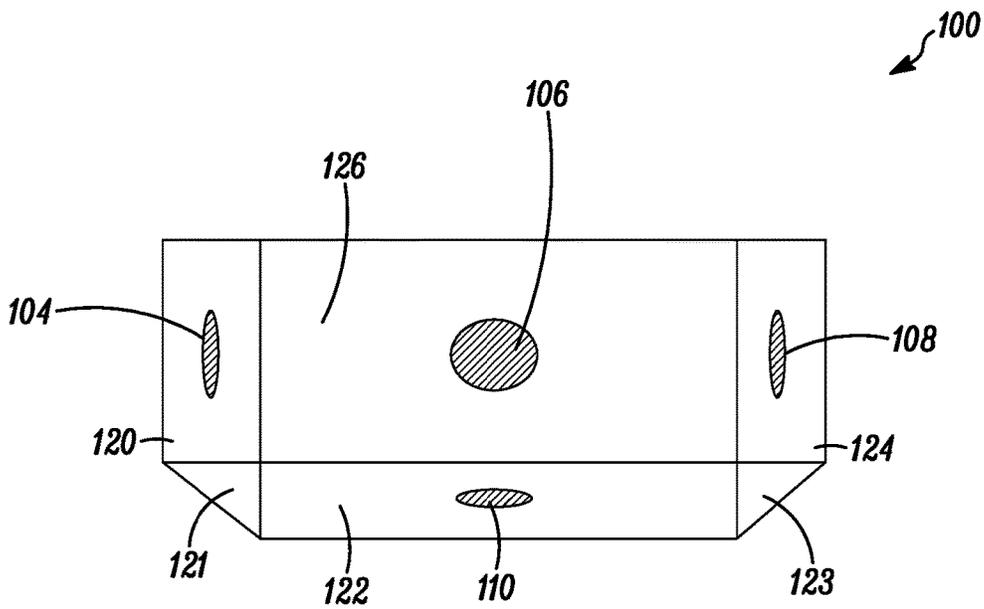


FIG. 2

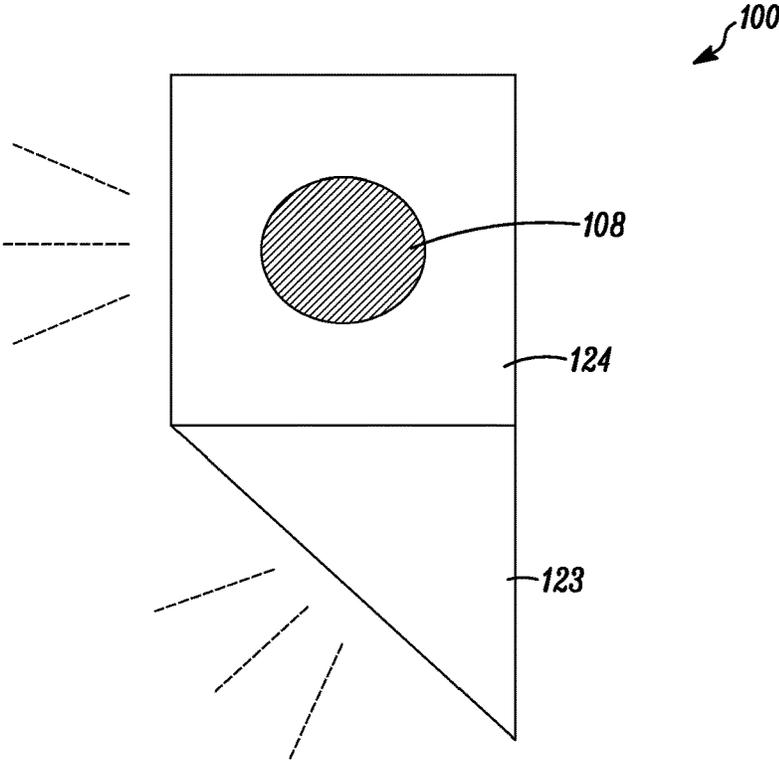


FIG. 3

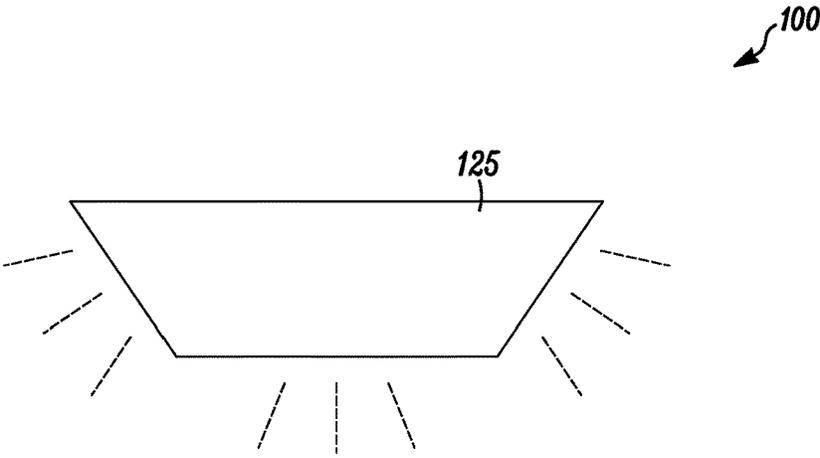


FIG. 4

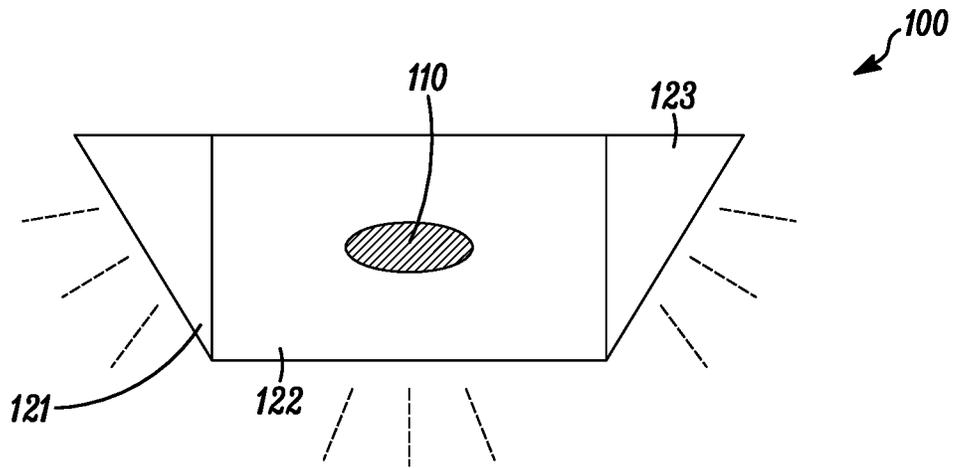


FIG. 5

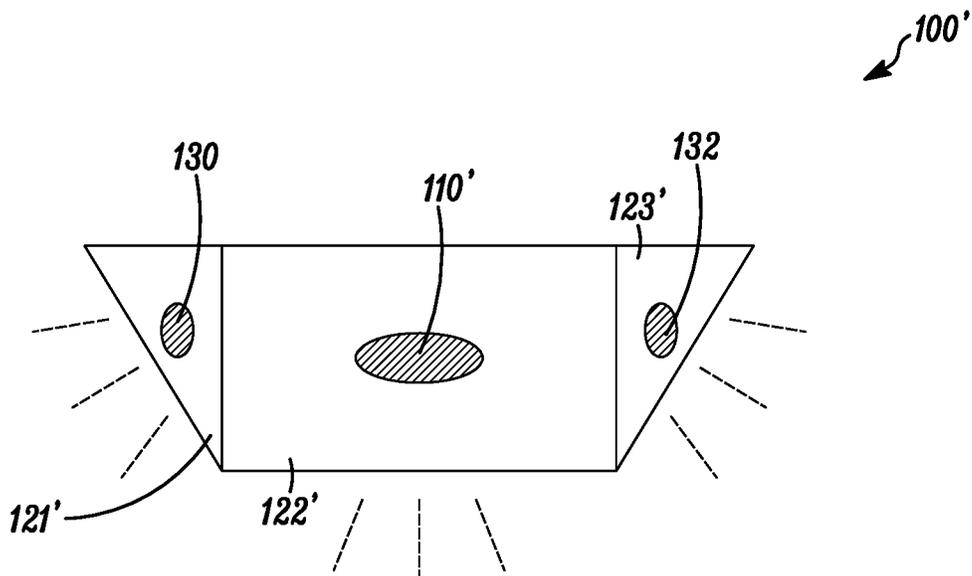


FIG. 6

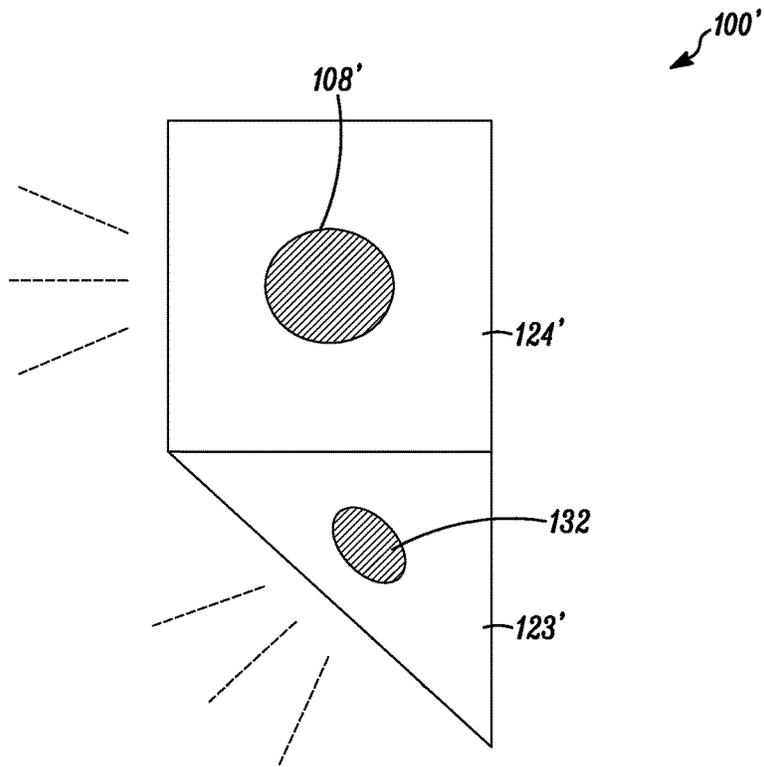


FIG. 7

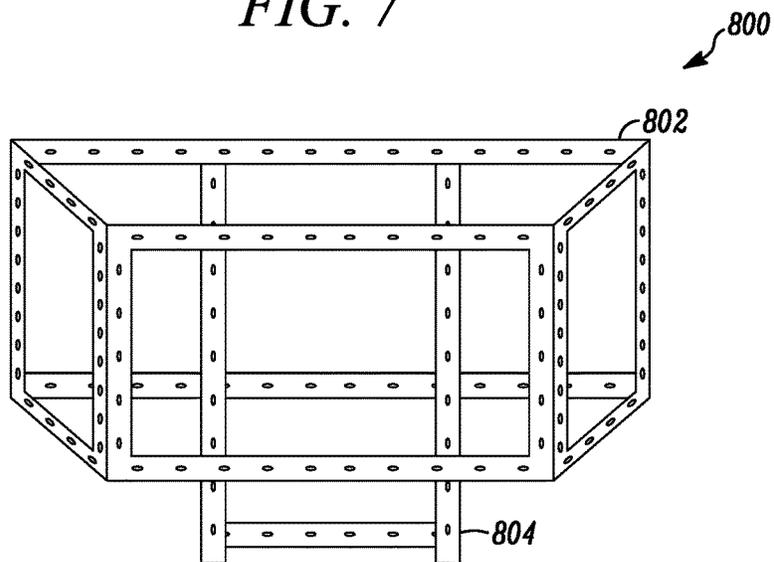


FIG. 8

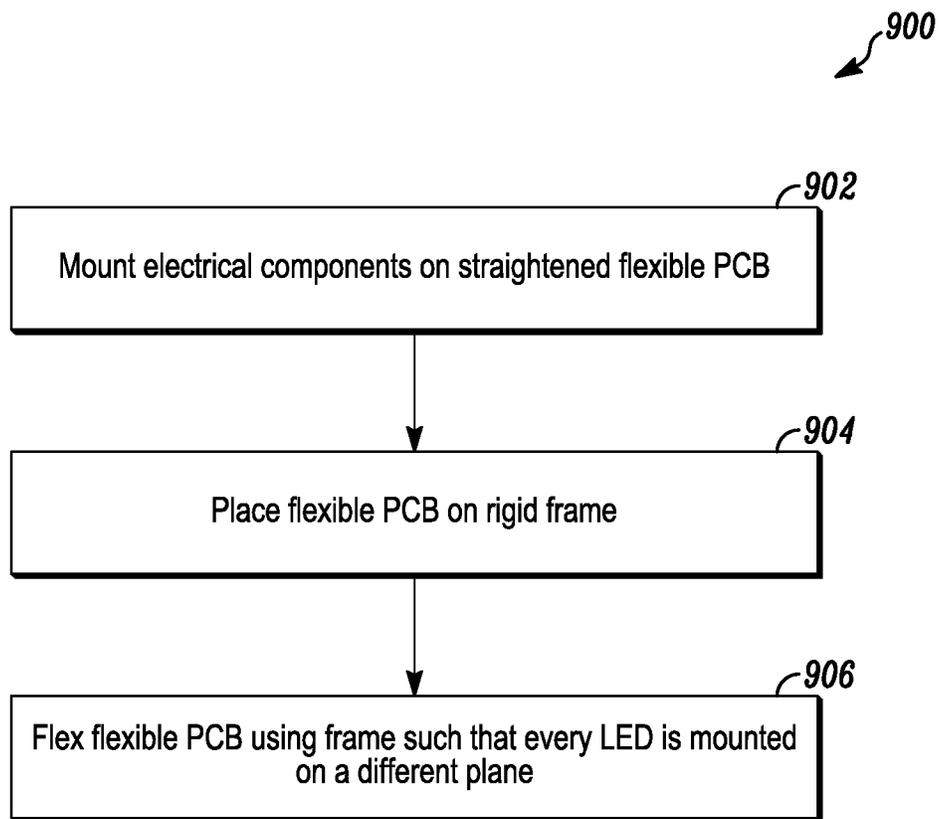


FIG. 9

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SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR MOUNTING LIGHT EMITTING DIODES FOR A VISUAL ALARM DEVICE IN MULTIPLE PLANES

FIELD

The present invention relates generally to alarm devices. More particularly, the present invention relates to visual alarm devices.

BACKGROUND

Security systems are known to detect threats within a secured area, and such threats include events that represent a risk to human safety or a risk to assets.

Security systems typically include one or more security sensors that detect the threats within the secured area. For example, smoke, motion, and/or intrusion sensors are distributed throughout the secured area in order to detect the threats. Furthermore, security systems typically include notification appliances, such as sounders and visual alarm devices (i.e. strobe lights).

Standards organizations, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), specify standards for alarm devices. For example, UL 1638 specifies a light pattern for light emitted by a visual alarm device in a strobe light fire protection notification system.

Light patterns defined by known standards, such as UL 1638, are difficult to achieve. For example, known visual alarm devices that emit light patterns that comply with known standards (e.g. UL 1638) include a single light source and a complicated arrangement of lenses and reflectors. However, lenses and reflectors can add to a cost of the visual alarm device. Thus, there is a need for less expensive systems and methods that comply with known standards.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a visual alarm device in accordance with disclosed embodiments;

FIG. 2 is a front view of a visual alarm device in accordance with disclosed embodiments;

FIG. 3 is a side view of a visual alarm device in accordance with disclosed embodiments;

FIG. 4 is a top view of a visual alarm device in accordance with disclosed embodiments;

FIG. 5 is a bottom view of a visual alarm device in accordance with disclosed embodiments;

FIG. 6 is a bottom view of a visual alarm device in accordance with disclosed embodiments;

FIG. 7 is a side view of a visual alarm device in accordance with disclosed embodiments;

FIG. 8 is a perspective view of a frame of a visual alarm device in accordance with disclosed embodiments; and

FIG. 9 is a flow diagram of a method in accordance with disclosed embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

While this invention is susceptible of an embodiment in many different forms, there are shown in the drawings and will be described herein in detail specific embodiments thereof with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered as an exemplification of the principles of the invention. It is not intended to limit the invention to the specific illustrated embodiments.

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Embodiments disclosed herein can include systems and methods for mounting a plurality of light emitting diodes (LEDs) for a visual alarm device in multiple planes on a single printed circuit board (PCB). For example, in some embodiments, the single PCB may comprise a flexible PCB, the plurality of LEDs can be mounted to the flexible PCB, and the flexible PCB can be mounted to a rigid frame or assembly. Furthermore, in some embodiments, the flexible PCB can flex to conform to a shape of the rigid frame or assembly such that each of the plurality of LEDs can be mounted in a respective one of a plurality of planes and oriented in a respective one of a plurality of directions to generate a light pattern. Further still, in some embodiments, each of the plurality of LEDs can be electrically coupled to one another via electrical components mounted to the flexible PCB.

In some embodiments, the visual alarm device can include four LEDs, and each of the four LEDs can be mounted in a respective one of four different planes. In some embodiments, the visual alarm device can include six LEDs, and each of the six LEDs can be mounted in a respective one of six different planes. In any embodiment, because the plurality of LEDs can be mounted in the multiple planes, reflectors or lenses are not required for the visual alarm device to emit the light pattern that complies with UL 1638 and other known standards.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a visual alarm device **100** in accordance with disclosed embodiments. As seen in FIG. 1, the visual alarm device **100** can include a flexible PCB **102**, a plurality of LEDs **104-110** mounted on the flexible PCB **102**, and a plurality of faces **120-125** of the visual alarm device **100**. In some embodiments, wiring and circuitry may be printed on the flexible PCB **102** to electrically couple the plurality of LEDs **104-110** with one another, and in some embodiments, the visual alarm device **100** can be mounted to a wall or ceiling that can be substantially parallel with a front side of the plurality of faces **126**. When seen from the perspective view of FIG. 1, the visual alarm device **100** can have a generally frustum shape.

In some embodiments, each of the plurality of LEDs **104-110** can be mounted in a respective one of a plurality of planes by, for example, flexing the flexible PCB **102** to orient each of the plurality of LEDs **104-110** in a respective one of a plurality of directions. For example, a first of the plurality of LEDs **104** can be mounted in a first of the plurality of planes defined by a first true side of the plurality of faces **120**, a second of the plurality of LEDs **106** can be mounted in a second of the plurality of planes defined by the front side of the plurality of faces **126**, a third of the plurality of LEDs **108** can be mounted in a third of the plurality of planes defined by a second true side of the plurality of faces **124**, and a fourth of the plurality of LEDs **110** can be mounted in a fourth of the plurality of planes defined by a bottom side of the plurality of faces **120**.

FIG. 2 is a front view of the visual alarm device **100** and shows the first true side of the plurality of faces **120**, the front side of the plurality of faces **126**, the second true side of the plurality of faces **124**, a first downward side of the plurality of faces **121**, a second downward side of the plurality of faces **123**, a bottom side of the plurality of faces **122**, the first of the plurality of LEDs **104**, the second of the plurality of LEDs **106**, the third of the plurality of LEDs **108**, and the fourth of the plurality of LEDs **110**. When seen from the front view of FIG. 2, the visual alarm device **100** can have a generally rectangular shape.

FIG. 3 is a side view of the visual alarm device **100** and shows the second true side of the plurality of faces **124**, the

second downward side of the plurality of faces **123**, and the third of the plurality of LEDs **108**. As seen in FIG. 3, a bottom half of the visual alarm detector **100** that includes at least the bottom side of the plurality of faces **122** can be angled downward to illuminate an area generally below the visual alarm device **100**. Furthermore, in some embodiments one or both of the second true side of the plurality of faces **124** and the first true side of the plurality of faces **120** can be angled downward.

FIG. 4 is a top view of the visual alarm device **100** and shows a top side of the plurality of faces **125**. When seen from the top view of FIG. 4, the visual alarm device **100** can have a generally trapezoidal shape. However, embodiments disclosed are not so limited, and it is to be understood that the visual alarm device **100** can be curved to have a half-circle shape or a half-ellipse shape. In some embodiments, the flexible PCB **102** may not cover the top side of the plurality of faces **125**.

FIG. 5 is a bottom view of the visual alarm device **100** and shows the first downward side of the plurality of faces **121**, the second downward side of the plurality of faces **123**, the bottom side of the plurality of faces **122**, and the fourth of the plurality of LEDs **110**. When seen from the bottom view of FIG. 5, the visual alarm device **100** can have a generally trapezoidal shape. Furthermore, in some embodiments the first downward side of the plurality of faces **121**, the second downward side of the plurality of faces **123**, and the bottom side of the plurality of faces **122** can be angled downward.

FIG. 6 is a bottom view of a visual alarm device **100'** in accordance with disclosed embodiments and shows a first downward side of a plurality of faces **121'**, a second downward side of the plurality of faces **123'**, a bottom side of the plurality of faces **122'**, a fourth of a plurality of LEDs **110'** mounted in a fourth of a plurality of planes defined by the bottom side of the plurality of faces **122'**, a fifth of the plurality of LEDs **130** mounted in a fifth of the plurality of planes defined by the first downward side of the plurality of faces **121'**, and a sixth of the plurality of LEDs **132** mounted in a sixth of the plurality of planes defined by the second downward side of the plurality of faces **123'**.

FIG. 7 is a side view of the visual alarm device **100'** and shows a second true side of the plurality of faces **124'**, a second downward side of the plurality of faces **123'**, a third of the plurality of LEDs **108'**, and the sixth of the plurality of LEDs **132**.

FIG. 8 is a perspective view of a frame **800** in accordance with disclosed embodiment. As seen in FIG. 8, the frame **800** can include a frustum frame assembly **802** and a back frame assembly **804**. In some embodiments, the frustum frame assembly **802** may include a plurality of brackets and arms to define the plurality of faces **120**, **124-126**, and the frustum frame assembly **802** may include a generally frustum shape. Furthermore, in some embodiments, the back frame assembly **804** may include a generally rectangular shape and can be attached to the frustum frame assembly **804**. In some embodiments, the back frame assembly **804** can be used to mount a visual alarm device to a wall or a ceiling. Furthermore, in some embodiments, an intersection between the frustum frame assembly **802** and the back frame assembly **804** may define the plurality of faces **120**, **124-126**. Further still, in some embodiments, the frustum frame assembly **802** and the back frame assembly **804** may flex the flexible PCB **102** to orient the plurality of LEDs **104-110**, **104'-110'**, **130**, **132** in the plurality of directions for mounting the plurality of LEDs **104-110**, **104'-110'**, **130**, **132** in the plurality of planes defined by the plurality of faces **120-126**, **120'-126'** of the visual alarm device **100**, **100'**.

FIG. 9 is a flow diagram of a method **900** for forming a visual alarm device in accordance with disclosed embodiments. As seen in FIG. 9, the method **900** can include mounting electrical components (e.g. LEDs, wires, micro-processors, etc.) on a straightened or non-flexed flexible PCB (e.g. the PCB **102**) as in **902**, placing the flexible PCB over a rigid frame (e.g. the frame **800**) as in **904**, and using a shape of the rigid frame to flex the flexible PCB to orient a plurality of LEDs that are part of the electrical components in a plurality of directions for mounting the plurality of LEDs in a plurality of planes as in **906**. Once connected electrically, each of the plurality of LEDs can flash simultaneously during an alarm or emergency situation.

Embodiments disclosed herein are described without a reflector, thereby minimizing cost. However, embodiments disclosed herein are not so limited and may include a lens or a reflector, for example, a reflector that can reflect upward-projected light, for example, LED light emitted in an upward direction, downward, thereby increasing efficiency and complying with UL 1638, which does not require light to be projected upward.

Although a few embodiments have been described in detail above, other modifications are possible. For example, the logic flows described above do not require the particular order described or sequential order to achieve desirable results. Other steps may be provided, steps may be eliminated from the described flows, and other components may be added to or removed from the described systems. Other embodiments may be within the scope of the invention.

From the foregoing, it will be observed that numerous variations and modifications may be effected without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. It is to be understood that no limitation with respect to the specific system or method described herein is intended or should be inferred. It is, of course, intended to cover all such modifications as fall within the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A visual alarm device comprising:
 - a plurality of light emitting diodes (LEDs) mounted on a flexible printed circuit board (PCB) and configured to flash during an emergency situation,
 - wherein each of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a respective one of a plurality of planes, and
 - wherein the visual alarm device has a generally trapezoidal shape when seen from above.
2. The visual alarm device of claim 1 further comprising a frame.
3. The visual alarm device of claim 2 wherein the frame includes a frustum frame assembly having a frustum shape and a back frame assembly.
4. The visual alarm device of claim 3 wherein the flexible PCB conforms to the frustum shape of the frustum frame assembly.
5. The visual alarm device of claim 4 wherein the plurality of LEDs includes four LEDs.
6. The visual alarm device of claim 5 wherein a first of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a first of the plurality of planes defined by a first true side of a plurality of faces defined by the frustum shape.
7. The visual alarm device of claim 6 wherein a second of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a second of the plurality of planes defined by a second true side of the plurality of faces defined by the frustum shape.
8. The visual alarm device of claim 7 wherein a third of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a third of the plurality of planes defined by a front side of the plurality of faces defined by the frustum shape.

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9. The visual alarm device of claim 8 wherein a fourth of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a fourth of the plurality of planes defined by a bottom side of the plurality of faces defined by an intersection between the frustum frame assembly and the back frame assembly.

10. The visual alarm device of claim 4 wherein the plurality of LEDs includes six LEDs.

11. The visual alarm device of claim 10 wherein a first of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a first of the plurality of planes defined by a first true side of a plurality of faces defined by the frustum shape, wherein a second of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a second of the plurality of planes defined by a second true side of the plurality of faces defined by the frustum shape, wherein a third of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a third of the plurality of planes defined by a front side of the plurality of faces defined by the frustum shape, wherein a fourth of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a fourth of the plurality of planes defined by a bottom side of the plurality of faces defined by an intersection between the frustum frame assembly and the back frame assembly, and wherein a fifth of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a fifth of the plurality of planes defined by a first downward side of the plurality of faces defined by the intersection between the frustum frame assembly and the back frame assembly.

12. The visual alarm device of claim 11 wherein a sixth of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a sixth of the plurality of planes defined by a second downward side of the plurality of faces defined by the intersection between the frustum frame assembly and the back frame assembly.

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13. The visual alarm device of claim 1 further comprising a reflector positioned above the plurality of LEDs.

14. The visual alarm device of claim 1 further comprising a lens.

15. The visual alarm device of claim 1 further comprising circuitry mounted on the flexible PCB to electrically interconnect the plurality of LEDs.

16. The visual alarm device of claim 15 wherein the plurality of LEDs flash synchronously.

17. A visual alarm device comprising:
a frame;
a flexible printed circuit board (PCB) flexed to conform to a shape of the frame; and
a plurality of light emitting diodes (LEDs) mounted on the flexible PCB and configured to flash during an emergency situation,
wherein each of the plurality of LEDs is mounted in a respective one of a plurality of planes, and
wherein the visual alarm device has a generally trapezoidal shape when seen from above.

18. A method comprising:
mounting a plurality of light emitting diodes (LEDs) on a straightened flexible printed circuit board (PCB);
placing the flexible PCB over a rigid frame; and
using a shape of the rigid frame to flex the flexible PCB to orient the plurality of LEDs in a plurality of directions for mounting the plurality of LEDs in a plurality of planes,
wherein the shape of the rigid frame is a generally trapezoidal shape when seen from above.

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